

State of Utah
Communicable Disease Rule
Updated October 1, 1999
R386-702-5. Special Measures for Control of Rabies.

(1) Rationale of Treatment.

(a) A physician must evaluate individually each exposure to possible rabies infection. The physician shall also consult with local or state public health officials if questions arise about the need for rabies prophylaxis.

(2) Management of Biting Animals.

(a) A healthy dog, cat, or ferret that bites a person shall be confined and observed for ten days from the date of bite as specified by local animal control ordinances. It is recommended that rabies vaccine not be administered during the observation period. Such animals shall be evaluated by a veterinarian at the first sign of illness during confinement. A veterinarian or animal control officer shall immediately report any illness in the animal to the local health department. If signs suggestive of rabies develop, a veterinarian or animal control officer shall direct that the animal be euthanized, its head removed, and the head shipped under refrigeration, not frozen, for examination of the brain by a laboratory approved by the Utah Department of Health.

(b) If the dog, cat, or ferret shows no signs of rabies or illness during the ten day period, the veterinarian or animal control officer shall direct that the unvaccinated animal be vaccinated against rabies at the owner's expense before release to the owner. If a veterinarian is not available, the animal may be released, but the owner shall have the animal vaccinated within 72 hours of release.

(c) Any stray or unwanted dog, cat, or ferret that bites a person may be euthanized immediately by a veterinarian or animal control officer, if permitted by local ordinance, and the head submitted, as described in R386-702-5(2)(a), for rabies examination. If the brain is negative by fluorescent-antibody examination for rabies, one can assume that the saliva contained no virus, and the person bitten need not be treated.

(d) Wild animals include raccoons, skunks, coyotes, foxes, bats, the offspring of wild animals crossbred to domestic dogs and cats, and any other carnivorous animal.

(e) Signs of rabies in wild animals cannot be interpreted reliably. If a wild animal bites or scratches a person, the person or attending medical personnel shall notify an animal control or law enforcement officer. A veterinarian, animal control officer or representative of the Division of Wildlife Resources shall kill the animal at once, without unnecessary damage to the head, and submit the brain, as described in R386-702-5(2)(a), for examination for evidence of rabies. If the brain is negative by fluorescent-antibody examination for rabies, one can assume that the saliva contained no virus, and the person bitten need not be treated.

(f) Rabbits, opossums, squirrels, chipmunks, rats, and mice are rarely infected and their bites rarely, if ever, call for rabies prophylaxis and testing. Unusual exposures to any animal should be reported to the local health department or the Office of Epidemiology, Utah Department of Health.

(g) When rare, valuable, captive wild animals maintained in zoological parks approved by the United States Department of Agriculture or research institutions, as defined by Section 26-26-1, bite or scratch a human, the Office of Epidemiology, Utah Department

of Health shall be notified. The provisions of subsection R386-702-5(2)(e) may be waived by the Office of Epidemiology, Utah Department of Health if zoological park operators or research institution managers can demonstrate that the following rabies control measures are established:

(i) Employees who work with the animal have received preexposure rabies immunization.

(ii) The person bitten by the animal voluntarily agrees to accept postexposure rabies immunization provided by the zoological park or research facility.

(iii) The director of the zoological park or research facility shall direct that the biting animal be held in complete quarantine for a minimum of 180 days. Quarantine requires that the animal be prohibited from direct contact with other animals or humans.

(h) Any animal bitten or scratched by a wild, carnivorous animal or a bat that is not available for testing shall be regarded as having been exposed to rabies.

(i) For maximum protection of the public health, unvaccinated dogs, cats, and ferrets bitten or scratched by a confirmed or suspected rabid animal shall be euthanized immediately by a veterinarian or animal control officer. If the owner is unwilling to have the animal euthanized, the local health officer shall order that the animal be held in strict isolation in a municipal or county animal shelter or a veterinary medical facility approved by the local health department, at the owner's expense, for at least six months and vaccinated one month before being released. If any illness suggestive of rabies develops in the animal, the veterinarian or animal control officer shall immediately report the illness to the local health department and the veterinarian or animal control officer shall direct that the animal be euthanized and the head shall be handled as described in subsection R386-702-5(2)(a).

(j) Dogs, cats, and ferrets that are currently vaccinated and are bitten by rabid animals, shall be revaccinated immediately by a veterinarian and confined and observed by the animal's owner for 45 days. If any illness suggestive of rabies develops in the animal, the owner shall report immediately to the local health department and the animal shall be euthanized by a veterinarian or animal control officer and the head shall be handled as described in subsection R386-702-5(2)(a).

(k) Livestock exposed to a rabid animal and currently vaccinated with a vaccine approved by the United States Department of Agriculture for that species shall be revaccinated immediately by a veterinarian and observed by the owner for 45 days. Unvaccinated livestock shall be slaughtered immediately. If the owner is unwilling to have the animal slaughtered, the animal shall be kept under close observation by the owner for six months.

(l) Unvaccinated animals other than dogs, cats, ferrets, and livestock bitten by a confirmed or suspected rabid animal shall be euthanized immediately by a veterinarian or animal control officer.

(3) Measures for Standardized Rabies Control Practices.

(a) Humans requiring either pre- or post-exposure rabies prophylaxis shall be treated in accordance with the recommendations of the U.S. Public Health Service Immunization Practices Advisory Committee, as adopted and incorporated by reference in R386-702-9(b). A copy of the recommendations shall be made available to licensed medical personnel, upon request to the Office of Epidemiology, Utah Department of Health.

(i) A physician or other health care provider that administers rabies vaccine shall

immediately report all serious systemic neuromuscular or anaphylactic reactions to rabies vaccine to the Office of Epidemiology, Utah Department of Health, 801-538-6191.

(b) The Compendium of Animal Rabies Control, 1999, Part II, is the reference document for animal vaccine use.

(c) A county, city, town, or other political subdivision that requires licensure of animals shall also require rabies vaccination as a prerequisite to obtaining a license.

(d) Animal rabies vaccinations are valid only if performed by or under the direction of a licensed veterinarian in accordance with the Compendium of Animal Rabies Control.

(e) All agencies and veterinarians administering vaccine shall document each vaccination on the National Association of State Public Health Veterinarians (NASPHV) form number 51, Rabies Vaccination Certificate, which can be obtained from vaccine manufacturers. The agency or veterinarian shall provide a copy of the report to the animal's owner. Computer-generated forms containing the same information are also acceptable.

(f) Animal rabies vaccines may be sold or otherwise provided only to licensed veterinarians or veterinary biologic supply firms. Animal rabies vaccine may be purchased by the Utah Department of Health and the Utah Department of Agriculture.

(4) Measures to Prevent or Control Rabies Outbreaks.

(a) The most important single factor in preventing human rabies is the maintenance of high levels of immunity in the pet dog, cat, and ferret populations through vaccination. All dogs, cats, and ferrets in Utah should be immunized against rabies by a licensed veterinarian.

(b) If the Utah Department of Health finds that rabies is present in an area of the state and a quarantine is declared, the Utah Department of Health may require that all dogs, cats, and ferrets be vaccinated at three months of age. Unvaccinated animals are subject to confinement and possible destruction.